



# Position Statement

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## **HB 4298 - Granting of State Land for More Roads**

***Sierra Club urges legislators to vote NO on HB 4298 (Lindberg), a bill that would open the door to unnecessary proliferation of road construction in pristine areas and state forests.***

### **Issue Background**

The State of Michigan provides recreational opportunities, protects habitat and offers opportunities for resource development on state owned forests and park lands. These public lands are particularly important because they provide opportunities for contiguous areas to be managed for hunting, fishing, hiking, berry picking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing, as well as wildlife, forest management and other kinds of uses.

Every extra road, even a two-track, which passes through public land makes protection of and management for these important public values increasingly difficult. Fire protection agencies advise that increased roads in forested lands leads to increased danger from wildfires because easy vehicle access into remote areas can result in muffler and campfire caused fires, as well as fires from cigarettes.

Currently, the DNR is allowed to grant an easement to private citizens for roads over state owned property if certain conditions are met. This allows the agency to discuss with the land owner their request for access and to work to address each situation based on the unique circumstances of that piece of land. HB 4298 *requires* the DNR to grant easements if those conditions are met (instead of keeping it optional and based on the specific circumstances).

Currently, an easement will be denied if “the construction or use of the new or existing roadway will result in *unnecessary* damage to or destruction of the surface, soil, animal life, fish or aquatic life, or property.” This bill changes the word “*unnecessary*” to “*unreasonable*,” which allows for more destruction of natural habitats.

**The Legislature should not support the destruction of natural habitats. Sierra Club urges you to vote NO on HB 4298.**

*Please contact the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter office at (517) 484-2372 for more information.  
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